

THE 50+ Connection

NEWS and EVENTS from the
Howard County Office on Aging and Independence

A Publication of the Department of Community Resources and Services

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A Message from Howard County Executive

Calvin Ball

This December, I wish you all a safe, warm, and happy holiday season! I also hope you will consider supporting our giving back programs, including Project Holiday and Operation Gratitude.

A reminder that Medicare Open Enrollment ends on December 7, so take advantage of this time to review your coverage with the help of the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP). They can help you understand your health insurance benefits, bills, and rights.

As I reflect on the past year, I am so proud of Howard County's efforts to be supportive of our older adult community:

- Our spectacular 50+ Centers were recognized by the Maryland Association of Senior Centers (MASC) for program excellence, including things like fitness programs, lifelong learning opportunities, nutrition education, socialization and more.
- Our Ellicott City 50+ Center was recently recognized as the "Best Senior Center" by Baltimore Style Magazine.
- To expand on our network, the County has embarked on a renovation of the Bain 50+ Center that will increase square footage, add a fitness center, and enlarge the exercise spaces.
- Our Loan Closet, which provides free medical equipment like walkers, wheelchairs, and so much more, moved into a new, larger space on Riverwood Drive. Their expansion allows them to provide access to assistive technology through a partnership with Maryland Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP) and to provide access to pediatric medical equipment.
- Launch of our HoCo DASH initiative, so the County can ensure it is delivering the most timely and effective services to the older adult community.

Earlier this year, I announced that Howard County is pursuing designation by the World Health Organization and AARP as an "Age-Friendly Community" for our exceptional resources to help everyone live well and age with dignity. I hope you will join me at our official launch event, now officially scheduled for December 3 at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center at 9:00 a.m. See you there!



Making Howard County an Age-Friendly Community

Howard County is undertaking an exciting venture beginning this month: the launch of Age-Friendly Howard County. The initiative will focus on efforts to ensure that Howard County is not only a great place for people to grow older but also a great place to grow up. An age-friendly community benefits all members of the community, regardless of age.

Join County Executive Calvin Ball, AARP Maryland representatives, Jackie Scott, Director of the Department of Community Resources and Services, and Jenna Crawley, Administrator of the Office on Aging and Independence on Tuesday, December 3 for the Age-Friendly Howard County launch at 9 a.m. at the Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, 10431 Twin Rivers Road, Columbia 21044. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the public is encouraged to attend. To RSVP in advance, visit <https://agefriendlyhc.eventbrite.com>.

What Makes a Community Age-Friendly?

A community that respects everyone, no matter their age or stage of life. Age-Friendly Communities work to ensure there are:

- meaningful employment and volunteer opportunities;
- accessible health care and social services provided in a respectful manner;
- affordable, accessible and safe housing options;
- useable outdoor spaces for all, including parks, sidewalks and bike paths;
- user-friendly ways to get around, including safe and accessible public transportation;
- engaging community activities and social events; and
- effective methods of information exchange in a variety of mediums so that all users are knowledgeable and included

Building an Age-Friendly Howard County is a long-term program that will require a new way of thinking and working together.

To be an age-friendly community requires collaboration among citizens of all ages, with input from older adults; businesses; non-profit organizations; government agencies; civic organizations; philanthropic groups; and anyone interested in making the community a better place for all to live, work and play.

Following the launch of the initiative, updates will be posted on the county's website, including a series of community events where interested individuals can sign up to be part of workgroups to address the needs and interests of the community. Workgroup topics will be identified by the community, and a public survey and focus groups will be developed to gather more information.

To learn more, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/agefriendly or follow us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/HoCoCommunity.



Howard County Office on
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Department of Community Resources and Services

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Giving Back to Comfort Children — Above, members of the Elkridge knitting group (pictured L to R, Karen Perkins, Grace Young, Mary Carol Gibson, and Joann Dixon) recently created blankets for 20 young patients at the Johns Hopkins Children's Center. This is the first year that the knitting group has donated items to the center, which help provide comfort to children undergoing medical treatment. The group meets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon at the Elkridge 50+ Center, and is open to all who like to knit, crochet or practice other needlework. Joining is as simple as becoming an **Elkridge 50+ Center** member – and membership is free!

Tai Chi Group Travels to China — Tai Chi students from **East Columbia 50+ Center**, led by their instructor turned tour guide Jianping "Ping" Mao, just returned from a whirlwind tour of China. Pictured at right on the Great Wall of China, the group fully experienced Chinese culture and immersed themselves in thousands of years of the country's history. Mao has been teaching Tai Chi at the East Columbia 50+ Center for over 12 years and led a group of his students to China two years ago to participate in a Chinese Tai Chi competition. On this trip, he was able to arrange for a private tour of a Tai Chi Masters studio. East Columbia 50+ now offers five levels of Tai Chi instruction on Monday and Wednesday evenings.



2019 PROJECT *Holiday*

The Howard County **OFFICE ON AGING AND INDEPENDENCE** is collecting new donated items for low-income seniors who reside in assisted living facilities and in the community. The **OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES** is also collecting gift items, including books and toys for families in need with children ages 0 to 5 years old.

The wish list for the children and adults includes:

Body Lotion • Body Wash • Books (ages 0-5) • Deodorant • Hair Brushes
Hair Conditioner • Scarves • Shampoo • Shaving Cream • Slipper Socks
Socks • Toothbrushes • Toothpaste • Toiletry Gift Sets • Throw Blankets
and • Toys (ages 0-5)

DONATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNTIL 5:00 PM DECEMBER 9 AT
Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services
9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046

FOR MORE INFORMATION **Office on Aging and Independence** — Tomiko Thomas
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www.howardcountymd.gov/communityresources • 410-313-6400

Help us Celebrate the Spirit of the Holidays!

Paws4Comfort is Accepting New Gift Donations for the Residents of Lorien Nursing Home

Suggested items include shawls, scarves, puzzle books, small stuffed animals, lap blankets and socks. **Gifts may be dropped off at Bain 50+ Center in the "LORIEN" box no later than December 13.** Thank you for your generosity!

Last Evaluation Date of 2019

Thursday, December 5

BAIN 50+ CENTER

5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia 21044



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